



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

## XX.—SPENSER AND TWO OLD FRENCH GRAIL ROMANCES

So far as the writer has been able to discover, attention has not been called to the probability that Spenser drew material directly from two French romances of the Grail-Perceval cycle for the episodes of the first two cantos of Book VI of the *Faerie Queene*.

Sir Calidore's maiden adventure (*F. Q.*, vi, i, 11-47) took place at the Castle of Beards. After parting from Sir Artegal (sta. 10) the Knight of Courtesy resumed his quest of the Blatant Beast. He had not ridden far in the forest, however, when he came upon a squire bound hand and foot to a tree. The knight promptly released the captive and inquired the reason of his plight. The squire explained that close at hand was a castle at which "a custome lewd and ill" was observed: the castle commanded a "streight" (pass) and its chatelaine, the Lady Briana, exacted "for toll" the beards of all knights and the hair of all ladies who traveled that way; for Briana was enamored of the doughty but disdainful knight Crudor who refused to requite her love until she should present him with a mantle lined with "beards of Knights and locks of Ladies." The squire and his "faire Damzell," having ventured that day on the pass, were set upon by Maleffort, Briana's seneschal, and the unhappy lover, incapable of withstanding so formidable a foe, was overcome and left secured as Calidore found him, while the seneschal went in pursuit of the maiden, who had sought safety in flight. The squire's words were interrupted at this point by a shriek, and knight and squire saw Maleffort emerge from the wood "hayling that mayden by the yellow heare." Calidore hastened to the rescue, and after a fierce encounter, put Maleffort to flight, and overtook and killed him, striking him down in the very entrance of the castle unbarred to receive him. Thus gaining admittance to the hold, for the corpse prevented the closing of the portal, Calidore routed the defenders and forced his way into the presence of the Lady, who heaped reproaches on him for his incivility. In reply Calidore condemned the wicked custom practised at the castle and adjured Briana to forego it. She refused, and it was agreed that she should despatch a dwarf with a ring as a token to summon Crudor to defend her in single combat

against the stranger. Sir Calidore perforce passed the night within the castle. The next day he met and overcame Crudor, but spared his life on condition that he wed Briana without dower. The Lady, touched by such magnanimity, feasted the company, including the squire and his damsel, and made a tender of both her hand and her castle to the Courteous Knight, who declined the offer of marriage and accepted the castle only to bestow it on squire and damsel.

Let us turn now to the episode of the Castle of Beards as it appears in the prose *Perceval le Gallois*, or *Perlesvaus*.<sup>1</sup>

As Sir Lancelot was riding through a forest one day, he met another knight bowed low over his saddle-bow groaning with pain. The stranger warned him to turn back because of the evil custom maintained at the pass of the Castle of Beards, where a knight was required to part with his beard as toll, or challenge it. Lancelot proceeded undaunted and immediately beyond a great bridge found two armed and mounted knights at a castle gate, which was adorned with the beards and heads of many knights. One of the twain ordered him to halt and pay his toll. To his inquiry as to the reason for depriving knights of their beards the answer was that hermits in the forest made hair-shirts of them. In the encounter that followed Lancelot's refusal to comply with the demand, he slew one knight and wounded the other. The Lady of the Castle with two of her maidens issued forth at this juncture and restrained the victor from killing the wounded knight. The Lady reproached Lancelot for the injury he had done her; he justified his act and inveighed against the wicked custom of the place. In the end it was amicably arranged that Lancelot should pass the night at the castle. At meat, for the Lady banqueted him, the courses were served by companies of knights in chains; each company was distinguished by some form of mutilation (the nose cut off, the eyes put out, etc.). By virtue of superior prowess Lancelot had escaped the fate of these maimed knights, the Lady told him. She ended by offering him her love and the lordship of her castle. He courteously declined, and the next morning resumed his journey.

<sup>1</sup> Potvin's ed. *Conte du Graal*, vol. I, p. 97 ff. For an English translation see Evans' *High History of the Holy Grail*, Everyman's Library ed., pp. 99-102.

The source of the fundamental motif of these two adventures, or rather two versions of one and the same story, is of course in a familiar legend of Celtic origin.<sup>1</sup> The story of the Welsh giant or king, whose ambition to possess a mantle lined with the beards of defeated brother kings was frustrated by Arthur, appears episodically in the literature of the Middle Ages and later.<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey's account is accepted by Professor W. A. Nitze as the probable prototype of the *Perlesvaus* form.<sup>3</sup> We read in the *Historia* that the giant Ritho had furs ("pelles") made of the beards of kings he had slain, and that on one occasion he sent to Arthur to demand his beard, which, in consideration of that king's preëminence, he designed for the principal place in the garment. Refusal, he warned Arthur, would be followed by a challenge to single combat, with the beard of the vanquished and the furs themselves as the spoils of the victor. Arthur chose to fight, and defeated and slew the giant. Malory's version varies from Geoffrey's only in details which, with a single possible exception, can have no significance for this study. Malory's King Ryons has "trimmed a *mantle*" with beards.

So profound is the change wrought in the form and spirit of this old Celtic tale, so considerable and material are the accretions to it, as it comes from the hands both of

<sup>1</sup> San Marte, *Beiträge zur bretonischen und celtisch-germanischen Heldensage*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Hist. Brit.*, x, 3; the so-called "Suite" *Merlin*, or *Livre d'Arthur*, Pt. II, fol. 105; Layamon, *Brut*, v. 11957 ff.; Malory, *Morte Darthur*, I, 24, where the version represents a fusing of the *Merlin* details with those of the *Chevalier aux Deux Épées*; Drayton, *Polyolbion*, song 4; the ballad of King Rience's Challenge (Furnivall's ed. Robert Laneham's Letter, pp. 41-2).

<sup>3</sup> *The Old French Grail Romance of Perlesvaus*, p. 104 n.

the *Perlesvaus* writer and of Spenser that the hypothesis of coincidence, to account for the closeness of the parallel between the two versions, is altogether precluded.

Moreover, to account satisfactorily for the variations of Spenser's rendering from that of the *Perlesvaus*, it is quite unnecessary, I am persuaded, to postulate an antecedent of Spenser's version nearer to it than is the Old French romance. True, the changes and additions made by Spenser are numerous: A squire bound to a tree and a fugitive damsel his partner in distress are substituted at the beginning for the knight with a flayed face; instead of two knights at the bridge there is but a single burly seneschal to execute the Lady's will; the Lady does not leave the protection of her hold, but is found by Calidore on his irruption into the castle (a detail which recalls Artegal in the castle of the Lady Munera, *F. Q.* v, ii); the whole part of Crudor, the loath lover who attaches hard terms to his favor, is without a trace in the *Perlesvaus*; the use to which the beards and hair are to be put by Briana is the adornment of a splendid mantle rather than the manufacture of hair-shirts, and would seem to be reminiscent of Malory (Spenser, indeed, specifically alludes to King Ryons, or "Ryence," *F. Q.*, iii, ii, 18); Spenser, lastly, entirely omits the part of the maimed knights. But the binding of a man to a tree, the infliction of cruel indignities on a fugitive damsel, the coldness of a scornful knight to a lady's passion, and all the other features of the Crudor episode are of the veriest commonplace of romance situation. Furthermore, the acceptance of the variations as Spenser's own contribution to the episode rather than a borrowing from a purely hypothetical original does not require the embarrassing qualification that the poet has in this instance handled source

material in a manner differing in any respect from his recognized method. Everywhere in Spenser we find borrowed matter, sometimes from one source, sometimes from two or more sources, combined with stuff of the poet's own fancy after the fashion of a patchwork quilt, but in a pattern superior to any of his originals in narrative technique, showing more complicated action, better motivation, and usually more varied love interest.<sup>1</sup> Precisely on points that contribute to these results does Spenser's episode of the Castle of Beards depart from the *Perlesvaus* version.

But Spenser can not have worked up, independently, his whole Castle of Beards episode from Geoffrey, Malory, or any other similar form. He knew and used the *Perlesvaus* rendering or an analogue that agreed with it on the following points: (1) the pass ("streight") commanded by a castle; (2) the name of the castle; (3) the nature of the wicked custom (the addition of the "locks of Ladies" to the toll is but a sort of duplication); (4) the advent of a knight-errant who is moved by first-hand knowledge of a specific instance of cruelty to undertake the overthrow of the custom; (5) the success of the knight against the champion or champions of the wicked custom; (6) the reproaches of the châtelaine and the nature of the knight's reply; (7) the feasting, on which occasion the Lady in vain offers her hand and her stronghold to the victor;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A recent study by Professor Reed Smith involving Spenser's treatment of sources (*The Metamorphoses in "Muiopotmos,"* *MLN.* xxviii, 3, 82-5) bears out my statements.

<sup>2</sup> Nothing can be more far-fetched and absurd than the parallel set up by Dr. Marie Walther (*Malory's Einfluss auf Spenser's Faerie Queene*, pp. 41-2) between Briana's tender of her hand and her castle to Calidore and the incident in Malory, x, 64, where the people of the Red City offered Sir Palamides one-third part of their goods after he defeated two brethren who had put them in "fear and damage."

(8) the sojourn of the latter in the castle for one night. No such analogue has come down to us. Copies are extant, however, of a printed edition of the *Perlesvaus*, dated 1521, which it is reasonable to suppose was accessible to Spenser.

The next event in Sir Calidore's quest, the recounting of which occupies the first thirty-nine stanzas of Canto II, brings the hero into contact with a youth whom Spenser calls Tristram, but who is in reality a composite of Malory's Tristram and a Perceval identical with the Perceval of Chrestien and the author of that "pseudo-Chrestien" portion of the *Conte du Graal* which comprises ll. 485-1282 of the poem as it appears in Potvin's edition, Vol. II, pp. 17-43. Spenser's freedom in the use of borrowed material is here again illustrated. With wonderful skill he crosses character with character, incident with incident, shifting the order of events, resetting and remotivating, until the finished product is a new episode which seems quite the poet's own creation.

Sir Calidore, having "waxed hole and strong" of the wounds he received at the Castle of Beards, promptly resumed his first quest. Riding through the forest, he espied a "tall young man" on foot engaged in single combat with an armed and mounted knight, while

"them beside a Ladie faire he saw  
Standing alone on foote in foule array."

Before Calidore could intervene the youth slew the knight with a thrust of one of his "darts," the only sort of weapon, except a "sharpe bore-speare," which he carried. Calidore demanded an explanation of this violation of the law of chivalry that none but a knight may shed knight's blood. The young man, a "slender slip" of scarcely seventeen years, richly clad in hunting dress, told how in ranging the forest he came upon the knight shamefully driving the lady before him. In answer to his protest, he asserted, the knight attacked him. The lady confirmed the youth's story and explained the cause of her ill usage. As she and her knight were

riding together that day they chanced to pass a "covert glade" where an unarmed knight sat with his lady. Her knight, seeing a lady "so lovely faire," was filled with "envy" and, forcing her to dismount, bade the other knight yield his love or fight. The other requested a stay till he could fetch his arms. But her knight would grant no delay and attacked and wounded the unarmed man, and then hastened off to scour the vicinity for the lady who had fled when he set upon her lover. Unsuccessful in his search, he "avenged his wrath" on her, his own lady, as they fared forth, refusing to allow her to remount behind him and urging her forward with the "butt end of his speare."

On the conclusion of the lady's piteous tale Calidore turned to the "gentle boy" who had rescued her and required him to reveal his identity if it would not displease him to tell it. The young man declared himself a Briton-born and the son of a king, and continued as follows:

"And Tristram is my name, the onely heire  
 Of good king Meliogras which did rayne  
 In Cornewale, till that he through lives despeire  
 Untimely dyde, before I did attaine  
 Ripe years of reason my right to maintaine:  
 After whose death his brother, seeing mee  
 An infant, weake a kingdome to sustaine,  
 Upon him tooke the roiall high degree,  
 And sent me where him list, instructed for to bee.

"The widow Queene my mother, which then hight  
 Faire Emilie, conceiving then great feare  
 Of my fraile safetie, resting in the might  
 Of him that did the kingly scepter beare,  
 Whose gealous dread induring not a peare  
 Is wont to cut off all that doubt may breed,  
 Thought best away me to remove somewhere  
 Into some forrein land, where as no need  
 Of dreaded daunger might his doubtfull humor feed.

"So, taking counsell of a wise man red,  
 She was by him adviz'd to send me quight  
 Out of the countrie wherein I was bred,  
 The which the fertile Lionesse is hight,  
 Into the land of Faerie, where no wight  
 Should weet of me, nor worke me any wrong:

To whose wise read she hearkning sent me straignt  
 Into this land, where I have wond thus long  
 Since I was ten years old, now growen to stature strong.

“ All which my daies I have not lewdly spent,  
 Nor spilt the blossom of my tender yeares  
 In ydlesse; but, as was convenient,  
 Have trayned bene with many noble feres  
 In gentle thewes and such like seemly leres:  
 Mongst which my most delight hath alwaies been  
 To hunt the salvage chace, amongst my peres,  
 Of all that raungeth in the forrest greene,  
 Of which none is to me unknowne that ev'r was seene.

“ Ne is there hauke which mantleth her on pearch,  
 Whether high towring or accoasting low,  
 But I the measure of her flight doe search,  
 And all her pray and all her diet know.  
 Such be our joyes which in these forrests grow.  
 Onely the use of armes, which most I joy,  
 And fitteth most for noble swayne to know,  
 I have not tasted yet; yet past a boy,  
 And being now high time these strong joynts to imploy.”

(Stas. 28-34)

Tristram ended by demanding to be made a squire. Calidore readily acceded to his insistent request, and having dubbed him, departed. The youth then gave himself up for a time to admiration of the “goodly gilden armes” he had won, after which he put them on and undertook to act as escort to the lady.

The action of the canto, as distinguished from the narrative put into the mouth of Tristram, is a blend of two motifs of the Perceval story: the encounter of a youth unpractised in arms with an experienced knight, and the rescue of a lady from the cruelty of her lord. The fight parallels the combat between Perceval and the Red Knight (Potvin, ll. 2057-2159), in which Perceval, a youth untrained in feats of arms, on foot and without armor, matched himself against the formidable Red Knight fully armed and well-mounted, slew him by striking him with

his "gavelot," a dart-like hunting weapon, and then donned his armor and appropriated his steed. The incidents occur, to be sure, at very different points in the two stories. In Chrestien and all the other *Perceval* romances except the *Perlesvaus* the encounter between the hero and the Red Knight takes place after the youth has left home, paid his respects to the Tent Lady, and visited the court of Arthur. Spenser's employment of such a combat at the beginning of his *Tristram* canto may, in view of the poet's well-recognized method of dealing with borrowed material, be wholly without significance; and, on the other hand, it may be another reminiscence of the *Perlesvaus*. We first hear of the son of the Widow Lady in the *Perlesvaus*, Branch III, Title VIII, where we are told of his slaying the Knight of the Red Shield, and shortly after, leaving his forest home. Spenser also remotivates and in part resets the incident, and it is this change of motivation and setting which involves the second theme mentioned above, the rescue of a lady from her lord's hard usage, and shows that there was present to Spenser's mind that episode of the *Perceval* story in which the hero champions the Tent Lady against her lord (Potvin, l. 4865 ff.). This incident, as it occurs in Potvin and the other narrators of *Perceval*'s adventures, has no connection with the encounter with the Red Knight. A short time after *Perceval* overcame the enemies of *Blanchefleur* and married her, he bethought him of his mother and set off to visit her. In the course of his journey he happened one day upon a lady in tattered garments mounted on a sorry steed, and listened to her account of the sufferings inflicted upon her by her husband. When that knight appeared at the close of the recital, *Perceval*, in the injured lady's behalf, engaged him in single combat. Just before the encounter *Perceval* learned that it was the Tent Lady

for whom he had undertaken to fight, and that he was the innocent cause of the rigors she had endured. Thus the parallel in motivation between the two incidents extends no further than this: both heroes fight as champions of ladies ill treated by their lawful protectors. But the forest setting and the figures of the youth on foot, the mounted knight, and the single wretched female witness unite to make Spenser's picture a composite of the two scenes in the *Perceval* story. Nevertheless it cannot be contended that, considered apart from other details of the narrative, Spenser's use of the theme of the championship of the ill-treated wife could be traced to *Perceval*'s espousal of the cause of the Tent Lady. Indeed, the crossing of motifs and incidents, together with the fact that the borrowings are employed merely in the nature of framework, serves so effectually to obscure specific sources that without additional evidence, we could not hazard a guess as to the particular *Perceval* romance to which Spenser is most indebted. But Tristram's account quoted above of his parentage and his forest rearing is sufficiently circumstantial to enable us to determine with practical certainty the originals of the *Perceval* portion, just as it reveals beyond a peradventure the source of the Tristram element.

For the purpose of comparison, let us review, first the early life of the Tristram of Malory, and afterwards such typical versions of the youth of Sir *Perceval* as Spenser can have known.

In the *Morte Darthur*, VIII, 1-3, we read that Tristram was the son of Meliodas, "lord and king of the country of Liones," and of Elizabeth, sister of King Mark of Cornwall, who died in giving him birth. The stepmother whom Meliodas gave his heir at the end of seven years plotted to poison the lad after children were born to her.

The design was discovered after two abortive attempts and the "traitress" was condemned to death by fire; but Tristram interceded and saved her. Immediately thereafter, however, Meliodas, as a measure of precaution, despatched Tristram into France in charge of Gouvernail, a gentleman of his court. Here the young Prince passed seven years and acquired "the language and nurture and deeds of arms" of that country. He also "learned to be an harper," and became so accomplished in hunting and hawking that the "book of venery is called the book of Sir Tristram."

No two accounts of the birth and *enfance* of Sir Perceval entirely agree. (1) The hero of the English *Sir Perceval of Galles* was the only son of Syr Percyvelle, a knight, and Achefleur, sister of Arthur. The father was slain at the tournament held in honor of his son's birth. That Perceval might never learn the use of arms Achefleur fled with him to the forest, accompanied by a single maiden. The boy attained the age of fifteen years with no accomplishments beyond skill in the chase. (2) The Perceval of Chrestien was the youngest of three sons. The name of neither his father nor his mother is given. The father's possessions were confiscated and he himself was banished. Having a manor in the forest, he was borne thither in a litter accompanied by his family and retinue. The two elder sons were treacherously slain a few years later, and the father died of grief. The mother reared her surviving son in ignorance of all that belongs to knighthood; hunting was his only diversion. (3) In the "pseudo-Chrestien" prologue of the *Conte du Graal* (Potvin, Vol. II, pp. 17-43, ll. 485-1282) which, while deriving from a distinct tradition, was in Spenser's day as it is in ours incorporated with the *Conte* as if part and

parcel of Chrestien's work, Perceval was born just after the death at a tournament of his father Bliocadran. The mother Herzelèide took her son to the forest, where she had a splendid manor-house built for them and their numerous company. (4) From the *Perlesvaus* we get but fragmentary information as to the boyhood of its hero, whose father Alain li Gros, king of the Valleys of Camelot, had long suffered the gradual narrowing of his domains through the encroachments of the Lord of the Moors. We are told only that one day the youthful Perceval roaming in the forest saw the Knight of the Red Shield and the Knight of the White Shield in mortal combat and with his spear slew him of the Red Shield who was gaining the upper hand. The father prophesied that no good would come of this deed; shortly afterwards he sickened and died. Within a week after the exploit and before his father's death Perceval left home to begin his adventures. There is nothing here of a flight to the forest. The boy, however, has grown up in ignorance of the nature of knights and knighthood. Other versions of the romance call for no consideration in this connection: Spenser could not have read the German redaction by Wolfram nor the Welsh *Peredur* and, though he may have been able to catch the general drift of French as old as that of the *Didot-Perceval*, this version of the Perceval story which has come down to us in a unique manuscript seems not to have been known on either side of the Channel in his day.

From the foregoing synopses of Malory and the Perceval romances it is not difficult to disentangle the threads of the Tristram story of the *Morte Darthur* from the tangle of Perceval elements and to trace the Perceval portion to its originals. In four particulars the influence

of the Tristram tale is clearly manifest: (1) The name of the father of Spenser's Tristram is borrowed from Malory with a slight variation of orthography. (2) Spenser's Queen Emiline acts through fear of the machinations of her son's usurping uncle. The usurping-uncle theme, which leaves the withholding of chivalric exercises from Tristram entirely without motivation, must have been suggested to Spenser by Malory's jealous step-mother theme, which for obvious reasons he could not, however, adopt. (3) Spenser's Tristram is sent to the "land of Faerie" rather than taken by his mother, as Malory's Tristram is sent to France by his father. (4) Quite unlike the Perceval of any of the romances, Spenser's Tristram is instructed in "gentle thiewes"; Malory's Tristram learned the "language and nurture" of France. Hawking is specified among the accomplishments of both youths.

The Perceval elements with which these Tristram features are interwoven constitute the major portion of the greatly condensed narrative which Spenser makes his Tristram recite. A comparison of these elements with the corresponding details of the various Perceval stories shows that, while there are, as we should expect, echoes of the *Perlesvaus*, Spenser drew his material chiefly from another French form of the story, the *Conte du Graal*. (1) In Spenser, the father died several years apparently after the birth of his son; in the so-called "disputed passage" in Chrestien (ll. 1607-82) the death of Bliocadran did not occur till a few years after the birth of Perceval. In this detail the "disputed passage" differs from all other accounts of Perceval. As the *Perlesvaus* makes the father live until after his son's departure from home, Spenser cannot have been following it at this point. (2) Spenser's Meliogras dies of "lives despeire." Vague as

this detail is, we can at least be certain that it cannot have been suggested by the commonly assigned cause of the father's death; it may conceivably be interpreted as reminiscent of the death of Bliocadran in the "disputed passage" from grief for the loss of his elder sons. Perhaps the death of the lord of the Valleys of Camelot in the *Perlesvaus* was even more distinctly in the author's mind. (3) Tristram calls himself his father's "onely heire." While it is true that the Perceval of the genuine Chrestien portion of the *Conte* is the youngest of three sons, the "pseudo-Chrestien" prologue makes the hero an only child. In the *Perlesvaus* Perceval has a sister who figures as co-heir to the territories of Camelot. (4) In Spenser the queen takes counsel "of a wise man red"; in the "pseudo-Chrestien" Herzelèide summons her *major*,

"Que elle amait de grant amor  
Qu'il estoit *sages* et vallans,"

and together they plan the flight (l. 971 ff.). (5) Spenser's Tristram lives in the forest surrounded by a numerous company; in both Chrestien and the "pseudo-Chrestien" mother and son are accompanied to the forest by their household. That the companions Spenser gives his Tristram are "noble" may be another Tristram echo, although Malory has no specific mention of any associates of Tristram save Gouvernail. (6) Spenser has a passage in which he paints the young Tristram lost in admiration of the accoutrement of the knight he has slain:

"But Tristram, then despoyling that dead knight  
Of all those goodly implements of prayse,  
Long fed his greedie eyes with the faire sight  
Of the bright Mettall shyning like Sunne rayes,  
Handling and turning them a thousand wayes."

(vi, xxxix, ll. 1-5)

Chrestien dwells through the course of several hundred lines on the fascination of the sight of knightly equipment for the *enfant* Perceval (ll. 1339 ff.):

"Et vit ecsus formoians  
 Et les haubiers cler et luisans;  
 Et les lances et les escaus  
 Que onques mais n'avoit veus,  
 Et vit le vert at le vermel  
 Reluire contre le soleil  
 Et l'or et l'asur et l'argent," etc.

Nothing similar occurs in any other version of the Perceval story.

Surely the evidence is sufficient to justify the conclusion that the main source of the Perceval element in Spenser's Tristram episode is the *Conte du Graal*, a version of which in French prose of the early 16th century was printed at Paris in 1530, and in circulation in France and England during Elizabeth's time. In consideration of Spenser's wide familiarity with romance literature, the burden of proof must rest with any one who should deny the extreme likelihood that the poet was conversant with versions of the two Old French grail romances which we have been considering. The occurrence of the two episodes under discussion in consecutive cantos and at the beginning of the series of adventures to which they belong is a circumstance that tells its own story: Spenser, when casting about for material out of which to work up a sixth set of knightly exploits, bethought him of the Grail cycle and launched the quest of the Knight of Courtesy with two adventures, the matter of which he derived from these romances.

The scope of this article admits of no extended discussion of the allegory of the *Faerie Queene*. But the study has bearings on that vexed problem that may properly be

indicated by way of conclusion. Spenser's allegory is largely mediæval in type; some of it is definitely reminiscent of the great allegories of the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> Little, however, of this important element of the *Faerie Queene* can be credited to the chief English source of Spenser's romance material; for Malory, unlike both the mediæval writers and Spenser, had small sense for the spiritual values with which external events may be invested: the stories he retold were good stories to him and nothing more. When, therefore, a thoroughgoing study is made of the mediæval elements in Spenser's allegory, the French sources of Malory and such other pieces of contemporary literature, French and English, as there is reason to believe Spenser knew must come in for critical consideration. That an examination of the *Perlesvaus* in this connection would prove fruitful seems highly probable; for the romance is pure allegory, and allegory which, like the *Faerie Queene*, imparts religious and moral teaching in terms of knight-errantry.

EDGAR A. HALL.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Temple of Venus allegory (iv, 10) with the garden of Sir Mirth in the *Roman de la Rose*.